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Editorial: Ban bump stocks

Kokomo Tribune Editorial Board

Starting at 10:08 p.m. Sunday, Stephen Paddock, 64, of Mesquite, Nevada, fired hundreds of rounds from his room on the 32nd floor of the Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino on the Las Vegas Strip in Las Vegas. During the 10 minutes which followed, he managed to kill 58 and wound 527 more victims who were attending the Route 91 Harvest music festival across Las Vegas Boulevard at Las Vegas Village. By the time police broke down the hotel room door, Paddock had killed himself with one of his own weapons. In all, 23 weapons were recovered from his perch along with thousands of rounds of ammunition.

But, according to leaked photos taken from inside the room and statements from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, that's not all they found.

"At least one of the weapons in the photographs appears to have been modified with a 'bump stock,' a device that allows a semiautomatic rifle to fire rounds faster, at a rate similar to a fully automatic weapon. Officials said that 12 of the rifles found in the suite were outfitted with bump stocks," reported The New York Times on Wednesday.

Wasting no time, Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-California, introduced a bill Wednesday which would ban the sale and possession of such accessories.

“It shall be unlawful for any person to import, sell, manufacture, transfer or possess, in or affecting interstate or foreign commerce, a trigger crank, a bump-fire device or any part, combination of parts, component, device, attachment or accessory that is designed or functions to accelerate the rate of fire of a semiautomatic rifle but not convert the semiautomatic rifle into a machine gun,” the bill states.

Some will say this is politicizing a tragedy.

It is.

It needs to be.

There’s never a better time than right now to address what ails us. This should be an easy issue for politicians of both parties to get behind. It has nothing to do with banning the weapons themselves. What we should be doing is finding something, anything, we can do to try to limit the body count so that the next Stephen Paddock has just that much harder of a time mowing down scores of innocents.